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Early Lottie figures show big increase

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — If initial projections hold, Southern Baptist giving to the 2003 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will be up between 18-22% over 2002, International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin announced on March 10.

Surpassing the \$133 million goal — or reaching the \$150 million challenge goal — would mean loosening restrictions on missionary appointments that were imposed in 2003, Rankin said. The record \$115 million Southern Baptists gave to the offering in 2002 was an increase of 1.15% over 2001 but \$10 million short of the goal.

"We are overwhelmed and praise God for the outpouring of support from our churches in their giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," said Rankin, a Mississippi native.

"We are grateful for the special promotion Woman's Missionary Union has given in encouraging churches to give generously. If the pattern of receipts continues through the next three months at this increased level, we should be able to relax some of our appointment restrictions and move waiting candidates to the field," he said.

IMB staff and missionaries have been blessed by testimonies of how God stirred both large and small churches to new levels of sacrificial giving when they heard missionaries were being kept from the field for lack of finances, Rankin said.

"Gifts from some of the larger churches have been unprecedented, but it has been an almost daily emotional experience to hear from smaller churches that have multiplied their giving two, four, or even six times," he said. "There have been stories of



LOTTIE RESULTS — If initial projections hold, Southern Baptist giving to the 2003 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will increase significantly over 2002, enabling the International Mission Board to baptize even more new believers than the 500,000 people baptized worldwide last year. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

personal sacrifice and multiple waves of giving again and again as God moves in the hearts of His people."

A one-time outpouring of response will not suffice, however, when God is continuing to call more and more new missionaries for overseas service, Rankin said.

"As grateful as we are for these gifts to the Lottie Moon offering, it will be important for churches to sustain this increased level of giving to next year's LMCO, as well as to the Cooperative Program," Rankin said. "Once we send missionaries to the field, it is imperative that we sustain their support."

Southern Baptist hearts that are broken over a lost world also should be broken over America, Rankin said.

"I also would encourage churches to give just as sacrificially to the Annie Armstrong Offering at this Easter season," he said. "The North American Mission Board also has had to defer sending missionary personnel in a crucial hour. Southern Baptists must seize the opportunity to impact our nation and Canada with the Gospel."

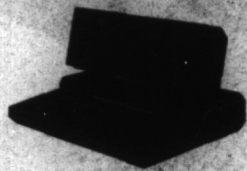
With God moving in unprecedented ways all over the world, Southern Baptists will be found faithful to their missions mandate, Rankin said.

"Last year, baptisms overseas exceeded 500,000 for the first time. Our missionaries were able to engage 192 new people groups," he said. "Global events are creating a spiritual hunger, traditional barriers are falling, and the harvest is accelerating. That's why God is calling out more and more missionary personnel."

"Southern Baptists have been blessed richly in numbers and resources, and I believe we will give an account to God for how we respond to the responsibility and opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord. It looks like this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will reflect the priority Southern Baptists give to missions."

"I believe we will be found faithful in doing whatever it takes to reach a lost world."

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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The high cost of following Christ

For the second time in little over a year, Southern Baptists are facing another of our darkest days. On the morning of March 15, four International Mission Board (IMB) workers were gunned down during an ambush in the northern Iraq city of Mosul and at press time, a fifth worker was clinging to life in critical condition at a U.S. military hospital in Iraq. IMB identified the dead workers as:

— Larry T. Elliott, age 60, and his wife Jean Dover Elliott, age 58, of Cary, N.C. The Elliots had worked for IMB since 1978, and both died at the scene of the attack.

— Karen Denise Watson, age 38, of Bakersfield, Ca. She had worked for IMB exactly one year, and died at the scene of the attack.

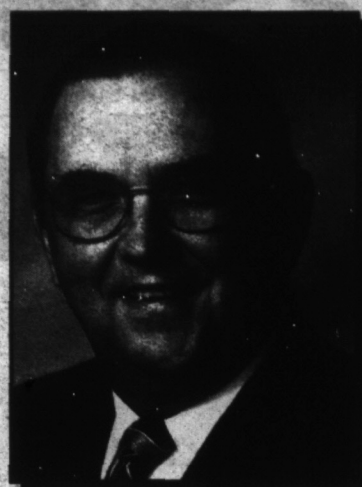
— David E. McDonnell, age 28, of Rowlett, Texas. His length of IMB service was not immediately available. He died while being transferred to a U.S. military hospital in Baghdad, after surgeons at a military hospital in Mosul worked for six hours to save his life.

McDonnell's wife, Carrie Taylor McDonnell, age 26, is listed in critical condition at an undisclosed military hospital in Iraq. Her length of IMB service was not immediately available.

Initial reports from IMB and secular news sources indicate that the five Americans were traveling without escort in one car near Mosul, when a car pulled alongside and the occupants opened fire with automatic weapons and possibly rocket-propelled grenades. An Iraqi policeman came upon the scene some time later, determined that the Elliots and Watson were dead, and transported the McDonnells to the military hospital, those sources reported.

The five workers were scouting the best location for a water purification project, Michelle DeVoss of First Church in Cary, N.C., told NBC News.

The five knew they were traveling to a dangerous part of the world but decided to press on, said IMB spokeswoman Manda



Larry T. Elliott



Jean D. Elliott



Karen D. Watson

Roten in the NBC report. "Their personal love for God and their desire to obey Him would outweigh any personal risks for them. When you think about overseas service, and when you sense God calling you to go overseas, safety isn't the primary concern."

Just 14 months ago, three IMB workers were murdered and a fourth seriously wounded in an attack by a lone gunman at Jibla Baptist Hospital in Jibla, Yemen. Killed were surgeon Martha Myers, hospital administrator Bill Koehn, and supply manager Kathleen Gariety. Pharmacist Donald Caswell was critically injured but has recovered and returned to the mission field.

Exactly one year ago this month, a powerful bomb placed inside a crowded bus shelter during a rainstorm at the Davao City airport in the Philippines claimed the life of IMB missionary Bill Hyde and seriously wounded several members of another missionary family.

Thus the list of martyrs grows. When these tragedies occur, we are reminded again



David E. McDonnell



Carrie T. McDonnell

of the high cost borne by the bold believers who choose to take the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) seriously and follow Christ to the most dangerous places on earth for the sake of the Gospel. The cost sometimes includes death at the hands of those who despise us, but it has always been so.

Jesus told his disciples long ago, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18 NIV)

At a time like this, His words have never been clearer.

GUEST OPINION:



Not all things are profitable

By Lee Yancey, consultant
Christian Action Commission

use their words and actions to draw others to Himself.

Drinking or not drinking is not a salvation issue. To drink is not unlawful but it is unprofitable. Drinking alcohol can be hazardous to you and to others. Alcohol use contributes to premarital sex, date rape, car accidents, domestic violence, depression, and a host of other evils.

Whether a Christian likes it or not, the use of alcohol affects our witness. There are consequences of our decisions which we need to consider before we make a choice. Paul instructs believers on a number of occasions to "live a life worthy of their calling." What does this mean? In James chapter 2, the Bible says that "faith without works is dead and that our faith is evidenced by our works."

Works will not get us to heaven but they may help someone else to get there. For example, when I was in high school, I became burdened about one of my friends on the football team because I knew that he was not a Christian. I had not been an angel myself, but I had accepted Jesus at the age of eight. I knew that God wanted me to witness to Danny (not his real name).

One Friday, after our pregame meal and a few hours before the game, Danny came and sat beside me in the gym. I asked him, "Danny, are you a Christian?" and he replied immediately, "About as much as you are."

A knife could not have cut me more deeply. I learned that

day that people watch how Christians live. Only when a Christian is living the cleanest life possible does he or she have the credibility to witness. People care more about how you live than what you say.

I have heard that "your talk talks and your walk talks but your walk talks louder than your talk talks." How you live is important in leading others to Christ.

My prayer is for you to continue to grow in Christ and learn that according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:12, "all things are lawful but not all things are profitable." Alcohol, while legal for adults 21 or older, is not profitable for growing in the Lord or for leading someone to the Lord. As we grow together, I pray that we can walk in a manner worthy of our calling.

To help teenagers with this troubling issue, I have developed a curriculum to educate them about the dangers of alcohol and a pledge to help them say no to alcohol.

If you would like to order a copy of Buzz Off! A Teenager's Pledge to Abstain from Alcohol, send one dollar per copy to the Christian Action Commission, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Homosexual groups set incremental agenda

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In the national push to legalize same-sex marriage, supporters consistently refer to a division between civil marriage and religious marriage. Same-sex marriage won't infringe on religious freedoms, they say, because ministers won't be forced to perform the ceremonies.

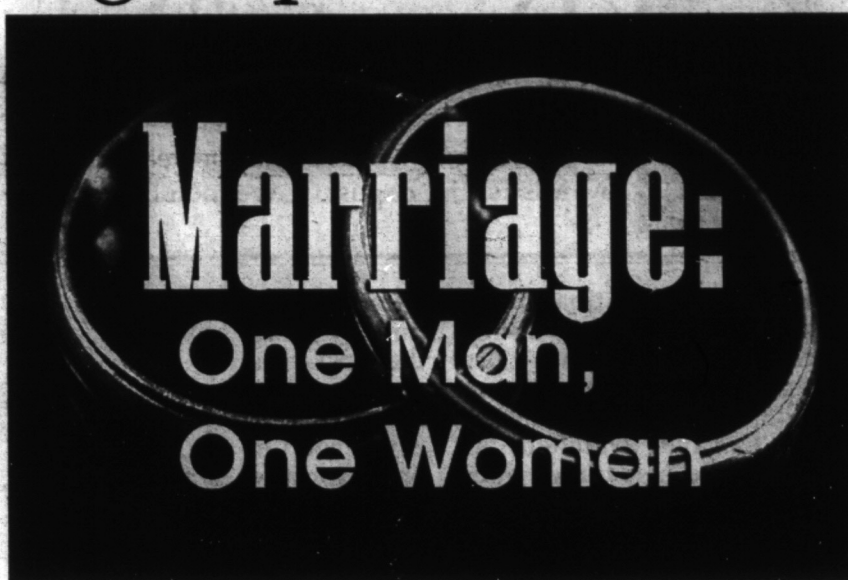
It's a common argument. GLAD, a homosexual activist organization based in the New England states, has a section on its website distinguishing between the "two types of marriage." The website for the Human Rights Campaign — the nation's largest homosexual activist group — has a list of talking points, one of which answers common objections to homosexual marriage.

"Civil marriage and religious marriage are two separate things," it reads. "Religious institutions will never be forced to bless relationships with which they disagree, just as today religious institutions can refuse to marry couples of different faiths or individuals who have been divorced."

Conservatives and traditionalists agree that it is highly unlikely that ministers would be told to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies, but they quickly point out that religious freedom entails much more than involvement in a same-sex ceremony.

"Remember what the argument is for: the constitutional illegitimacy of traditional marriage law," Princeton University law professor Robert P. George told Baptist Press. "That argument is that the law lacks a rational basis and is predicated instead on bigotry."

"... So if the belief in traditional marriage is a form of bigotry, then people who hold that belief and act on it in the religious sphere are likely to be treated the way racial bigots are



A continuing series from Baptist Press

treated when they act on racial bigotry in the religious sphere."

Ministers probably won't be forced to perform a ceremony, George added, but their churches could see moves to remove their tax-exempt status if they refuse to participate in a same-sex service.

A change in the marriage laws "almost certainly will" infringe on the freedoms of religious people, George said. It could happen as early as this summer, when Massachusetts is scheduled to become the first state with legalized same-sex marriage.

For example, what would happen if a county clerk who is a practicing Catholic refuses to grant a marriage license to a homosexual couple, claiming such an action would violate her beliefs?

There is a parallel in Canada. There, marriage commissioners — similar to justices of the peace in America — have been told either to perform same-sex ceremonies, or quit.

"Think of what you would do to a county clerk who refused to issue a marriage certificate to an

interracial couple," George said. "Since the premise is that this is bigotry just like racial bigotry, the conclusion would seem to follow as night follows day."

Conservatives like George point to what they see as a contradiction in the argument of same-sex marriage supporters. On one hand, supporters say that the traditional definition of marriage is biased and even bigoted. On the other hand, supporters say religious freedom won't be impacted.

In February, Sen. Mark Dayton (D-Minn.) told a group of homosexual activists that if a proposed amendment to the Minnesota constitution passes, "the forces of bigotry and hatred will have had their say." He also said a proposed federal amendment is "un-Christian."

Glenn Lavy, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund, says that same-sex marriage would violate religious freedoms in the workplace, in schools, and throughout society. Schools could be forced to teach that same-sex marriages and traditional marriage are identical, he said.

"Proponents of same-sex marriage claim that it is a civil right," he said. "If same-sex marriage becomes the law and is treated as a civil right, then the government will treat same-sex marriage the same way they treat race."

Both George and Lavy point to a case from the 1970s and 1980s in

which the IRS pulled Bob Jones University's tax-exempt status due to its racial policies. The university sued, claiming that its religious liberties had been violated. The U.S. Supreme Court sided with the IRS.

"The IRS said there is a strong public policy against discrimination in education and that not allowing interracial dating is discrimination, so they took away the tax-exempt status," Lavy said. "... There are already people making the argument that anyone who disagrees with homosexual behavior should not have tax-exempt status. If same-sex marriage becomes law, more than likely any church who holds to the historic biblical position will be denied tax-exempt status."

George, the Princeton professor, said same-sex marriage is another way for homosexual activists to seek approval for their beliefs. The strategy is one of incrementalism, he said.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
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"The cultural left has always claimed disingenuously that they were only interested in ensuring the toleration of private immorality," George said. "... They always denied that they were seeking approval, much less the state enforcement of their views, but it turns out that they were lying. What they were actually seeking was not to put a stop to the imposition of morality, but rather to impose a different morality."

The arguments for and against sodomy laws are one example of the incremental strategy, George noted.

"They conceded that it was immoral, but said, 'We shouldn't enforce private immorality. It was a victimless crime.' In 2004, we've come all the way around to saying not only does the state have to tolerate it, the state has to approve it and even give it the legal sanction of marriage."

China criticized

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. House of Representatives and a bipartisan commission have called on the Bush administration to promote a resolution at a United Nations conference insisting China halt its violations of human rights. The House voted 402-2 for a resolution urging the U.S. representative at the coming U.N. Commission on Human Rights to lead an effort to adopt a measure calling for the communist power to meet the international community's standards on human rights. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom endorsed the House's call for the resolution. "The overwhelming vote by Congress is important because the administration has yet to declare whether it will enter a China resolution," said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, D-Wis., chairman of the House's oversight and government reform committee. "While U.S.-China relations are improving in other important areas, dialogue on human rights is stagnant and we have yet to demand that it be addressed by the international human rights norms." The House resolution calls on the Beijing government to end religious persecution, including abortion and sterilization in all provinces, stop the forced return of refugees to North Korea and grant religious freedom to all citizens. Among other requests, the House also urged the Chinese government to permit unrestricted visits to the country by the USCIRF and other international groups. The USCIRF's plans to send a delegation to China were thwarted twice in the last year by Beijing-imposed limitations on its trip. The panel found unacceptable. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Religious Liberties Commission in Nashville, was appointed to USCIRF by U.S. President George W. Bush.

Looking back

10 years ago

Russell Dilday is fired as president of Southwestern Seminary by trustees, evoking bitter reaction from students. Trustees gave no reason for the firing, which was approved in executive session on a vote of either 27-8 or 26-7. After the decision, Dilday is locked out of his office.

20 years ago

Southern Baptists are less likely to "kill each other" now than they were two years ago, James T. Draper feels. The president of the 14-million Southern Baptist Convention said he hopes that is the "contribution I've been able to make" in 21 months of his presidency.

50 years ago

Liberty Church, Lauderdale County, calls 17-year-old Jack Mason as its pastor. He is the son of O. D. Mason, pastor of First Church, York, Ala. Mason will graduate from high school in May.

House boosts fines for broadcast indecency

WASHINGTON (BP) — Congress continued its crusade against broadcast indecency March 11 when the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed legislation sharply increasing penalties for such incidents.

The House voted 391-22 for the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act, H.R. 3717. The bill would increase the maximum fine by the Federal Communications Commission for a violation by a broadcaster or entertainer from \$27,500 to \$500,000. The measure also calls for FCC license revocation proceedings after three violations by a radio or television station.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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GHE IVXN PZHHLW FH
BGYBI YSEW TNBLH,
PHBPVCHO YSEW PBGE,
EWBE IH DBI MCVY WVY
IH VXTWE EV BCPYHN
HKHNI DBC.
LVGVPPSBCP RVXN: PSJ

Clue: G = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Revelation 2:7

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RED LIGHTS ON "GO" STREETS

This is a purely personal pet peeve. Although I have never heard one other person ever say anything about it, I'm sure that there are people, possibly many of you, who share the irritation that wells up within me when this takes place. You are driving down a road out in the midst of nowhere, the traffic is virtually non-existent, and you come upon a light that turns red at some four-way interchange. You put on your brakes, come to a stop, and then just sit there staring at the light. You look left, then right, and there is nothing anywhere in sight. There is nothing before you and there is nothing behind you. You wait, and wait, and wait for the light to change. Not one car, from any point on the compass, arrives. It is just you sitting at a red light on a "Go" street.

You wonder why in the world they would put a light there! Why would they spend all that money to put the light up, maintain it, keep it operating 24 hours a day, and the only thing that it does is stop you for no reason! It would be pointless to complain because I'm sure that there are 14 books on somebody's shelf with documentation explaining why the Government needed to put up that stop light on this "Go" street, but you can't help thinking about it anyway.

Maybe a note to the authorities asking that they re-evaluate the need for this light would prompt some action. Yet, after a brief reflection, you realize that that would be a waste of time and effort only to save you about 79 seconds that you expended waiting for the light to turn green. Now, wait a minute! There is all the gas that was wasted while you were sitting there! There is the fuel that it takes to start back up and overcome inertia! In some places there is the fear that somebody may come running out of a hidden place on the side of the road and attack you when you are sitting still.

I must confess that I have never taken any action to do anything to change the situation. Well, at least not those literal red lights on "Go" streets!



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Now, during the times that I have been sitting there waiting, watching, and wondering why they put that light up to stop me, I have thought about times when I have watched as churches, and sometimes individuals in churches, have put up a red light on "Go" streets in the Kingdom of God. Have you ever seen that? The church is making progress and things are moving forward. It just seems so apparent to everyone that God is at work and is leading His people — no less than the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night for Moses and Israel. Then, almost out of nowhere, somebody puts up a red light, so much so that literally everything comes to a screeching halt.

Now, I'm not talking about moving forward with clear thought and deliberate action. Nor am I talking about running ahead of God or moving so fast that you overrun your headlights, but some people do not know how to move forward. They are the managers of our red lights in our churches. They feel called to stop the forward progress of the people of God and ordained, if you will, to keep a heavy foot on the brake.

Now, please understand that I'm not talking about the beautiful balance that God has put in His family with younger and older saints. Some are so filled with energy that they want to charge Hell with a water pistol and then there are others who have seen life's gradual movement and recognize that there are times and places that you need to approach with caution. I believe that is God working out His will in the wisdom of a congregation. What I am talking about are those folks who stop the good things of God when there is absolutely no reason to stop! They turn the red light on and work hard to make

sure that nothing happens, nobody goes anywhere, and the work ceases.

I have watched as red lights have been set up on virtually every road in the Kingdom in order to make sure that something is stopped. Sometimes they are on the Youth Ministry Road and other times on the Music Road. I've seen the stop lights on the road to set up a scholarship to help ministerial students; to stop a budget from being passed; to stop deacon rotation from being implemented; to stop the calling of a staff member; to stop the building of a building; to stop the reaching of a certain group; to stop gifts to help a certain person; to stop efforts to buy a church bus; or, to stop a certain program.

Occasionally, and I might add, rarely, a red light will be set up and some time later the person will say, "I'm sure glad we stopped." Most of the time we look back to realize that stopping was not only momentary, but it so frustrated everyone else, deflated the enthusiasm, and discouraged the workers, that it never got started up again. There is a deadening effect that takes place that anytime they would look to begin again, they would think about the stop light that would come on and stop all of the progress!

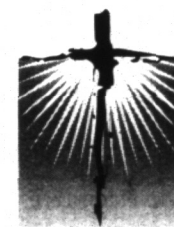
It must have been this kind of feeling that Nehemiah had as he was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and time and time again the adversaries tried to turn on the red light. They made fun of the workers and scoffed at their efforts. They attacked them and finally called for Nehemiah to stop working and come down and visit with them.

Nehemiah's response was what we must keep in mind, "I'm doing a great work and I cannot come down." The enemies knew that if they could stop the work, it might not ever be restarted.

We would be wise and well advised to keep in mind that the enemies of the work of God will try to stop us, and sometimes well-meaning but misdirected friends of the Kingdom will try to stop the work. Watch for the red lights and try not to be stopped!

Now, just a thought. I have learned through the years that you can gauge your speed so that oftentimes rather than being stopped you can slow up a little bit as you approach such stop lights and the light will change and you can press on.

Keep on "keeping on" in Kingdom work!



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Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 18, 2004

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

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June 9, 10, 11 (boys)

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For more info: contact Don Hicks at 601-292-3287 or 1-800-748-1651, or by E-mail at dhicks@mbcb.org.

WE WILL ACCEPT REGISTRATIONS AFTER APRIL 1, 2004.

State Bible Drill - 2004



STATE BIBLE DRILLS 2004

Date	Location	Registration	Drills Begin
TUESDAY April 13	Brookhaven, FBC Greenwood, FBC	2-4:30 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m.
THURSDAY April 15	Tupelo, Harrisburg Tupelo, FBC	2-4:30 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m.
FRIDAY April 16	Starkville, FBC Columbus, FBC	2-4:30 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m.
SATURDAY April 17	Madison, Ridgecrest BC Clinton, FBC	8:30-noon 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.	9 a.m. 9 a.m.
MONDAY April 19	Hattiesburg, Temple BC (west campus) Meridian, FBC	2-4:30 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m.
TUESDAY April 20	Laurel, Salem Heights BC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
THURSDAY April 22	Gulfport, FBC Batesville, FBC	2-4:30 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m.
SATURDAY April 24	Selection Tournaments Jackson, Alta Woods BC <i>Youth Speakers Tournament</i> 9:30-9:45 a.m. 10 a.m. <i>Youth Junior High Tournament</i> 12:15-1 p.m. 1 p.m. <i>Scholarship Tournament</i> 1:30-1:45 p.m. 2 p.m.		

Call your Baptist associational office for the date and location for your Associational Drill.

CHURCH PAKS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE DISCIPLESHIP & FAMILY MINISTRY DEPARTMENT.

CALL 1-800-748-1651 IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED YOUR CHURCH PAK.

SCHEDULE

Registration
8:30 a.m.

Festival
Begins
9:00 a.m.

May 4, 2004
First Baptist Church
West Campus
Brandon

For more info, call
the MBCB Church
Music Department
at
1-800-748-1651
or 601-292-3267

Mississippi Baptist
**STATE SENIOR ADULT
CHOIR FESTIVAL**

One Voice in Concert

March 28



First Baptist Church
Picayune, 6 pm

For more info, call the MBCB
Church Music Department at
1-800-748-1651
or 601-292-3267

BIBLE DRILL CAMP

August 5-7, 2004

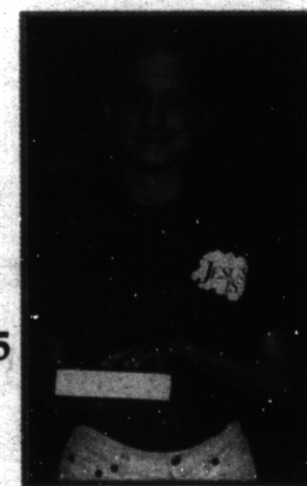
Central Hills Baptist Retreat

For: All children who have completed grades 3-6 (Bible Drill Camp is open to any church group whether they have Bible Drill at their church or not.)

Cost: \$90 • Registration: 1:30 p.m., Thursday, August 5



For more information about the camp program contact Don Hicks, camp pastor, at 601-292-3287 in Jackson or 1-800-748-1651, or by E-mail at dhicks@mbcb.org. For information about reservations or the retreat center contact Jim Ray, retreat manager, at 662-289-9730 or by E-mail at jray@mbcb.org.



Camp Activities include:

Bible study
Scripture memorization
Bible Drill skills
Worship
Time with missionaries
Flag ceremonies
Swimming
Canoeing
Horseback riding
Rifle range (safety and marksmanship)

OUTREACH TEAMS THAT WIN



G.R.O.W.

MONDAY April 19, 2004 6:30-8:30 p.m. Poplar Springs Drive BC	TUESDAY April 20, 2004 6:30-8:30 p.m. FBC
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Outreach Teams That Win: G.R.O.W.

"G.R.O.W." is based on Dr. Tidwell's phenomenally successful outreach approach. Under this proven-effective plan church members are asked to commit just one evening each month to outreach... with several different avenues from which they can choose. You will not want to miss this opportunity!

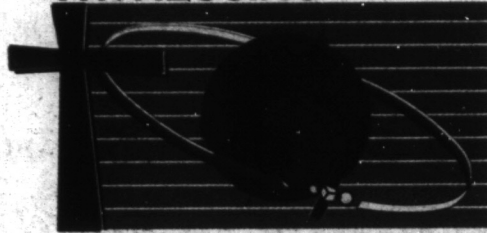


No preregistration required
No cost for the conference
No child care provided

LifeWay Bookstore materials
will be available for purchase.

For more information, please contact the
Sunday School Department at
1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3378 in Jackson,
or E-mail: johnanning@mbcb.org

WITNESSING



THROUGH MEDIA

April 30 - May 1, 2004

First Baptist Church
Christian Life Center
Jackson

WORKSHOPS

- Creative Production - Led by Lynn Bullock
- How Did They Do That? - Led by Lynn Bullock and John Padgett
- The Ministry of Media and What's New - Led by Anthony Coppedge
- How to Get Started on the Web - Led by J.C. Howell
- Advanced Web Site Design - Led by J.C. Howell
- "Nuts and Bolts" of Camera Operation - Led by Lynn Bullock
- Sound Advice Basic & Sound Advice Broadcast and Special Events - Led by Tony Brooks
- Director 101 - Led by Ian Richardson

AWARDS BANQUET SPEAKER

ANTHONY COPPEDGE

CHURCH MINISTRY CONSULTANT, BEDFORD, TEXAS

COST

Friday and Saturday cost is \$30 per person and does include all meals and conference materials. For churches bringing four or more persons for Friday and Saturday, the cost is \$25 per person.

Registration deadline is April 19.

FOR MORE INFO contact Judy Chen in Communication Services at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3378

The Many Hats We Wear

2004 Mississippi Baptist
Ministry Assistants Conference



April 19-20
Camp Garaywa, Clinton
Speaker: Johnnie Haines
Music & Worship: Lisa Leavell

For more info, contact Kay McDonnell, Pastor/Leadership Development, at 601-292-3305 or 1-800-748-1651, or E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org

Pray this day for...

March 19 - April 1, 2004

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"Whenever God is about to do something new with His people, He always sets them to praying."

Dr. J. Edwin Orr

For: (1) Substance Abuse (CAC Emphasis); (2) Pray for those planning short-term trips to Kham areas of Tibet, China this summer. Ask that God would prepare their hearts for service and also soften the hearts of the Kham people to receive the gospel gladly.

There are multitudes of people in Durban, South Africa, who are faced with the trials and heartache that come with being HIV-positive. They are in desperate need of support, but in even more need of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray for a Bible study/support group that the Durban Evangelism Team is trying to begin in Inanda, a township outside of Durban.

Pray for Muslim mothers in India who long to speak their hearts' desires, to cry aloud, sometimes even to laugh, but cannot because of the customs of their culture. Pray that they and their husbands will hear the Good News of Jesus and place their trust in Him. About 15% of India's more than 1 billion population are Muslim.

Japan has a population of 126.5 million people. Of that number, only 387,001 people are members of evangelical churches in Japan. Pray for Christians that are not members of churches, that they will find their places of service in the body of Christ. Pray for new Christians in the mega-cities to share the gospel with their relatives when they return to their hometowns.

For: (1) Church Families Workshop, Broadmoor BC, Madison, 8:30 a.m. - 9 p.m. (P/LD); (2) Please pray today for President Milo Djindjic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Eastern Europe, west of Yugoslavia).

Pray for the Ghana Baptist Seminary and the Baptist Pastor's Training School. Currently, there is a severe shortage of trained leaders and some pastors are trying to work with several churches at a time. Many of these churches are separated by long distances and pastors ride bicycles many hours to reach their people.

Helping people begin and continue the journey of abundant Christian living is the goal of every SBC missionary. "The Journey" is the name of a new church in New York City where Joe made a profession of faith. He shared this - "I had been coming into the city all my life to get into trouble. I never thought I would come to the city and find God, but I have, and I thank God for this church."

Remember in prayer Brazilian Baptist churches which are involved in this year's world missions emphasis. Special emphasis this year is on Brazilian Baptists working in India, Thailand, and Cuba. Ask God that church members might be encouraged in their praying, giving and going.

In January, some 50 people professed faith in Christ during evangelistic campaigns in Veracruz and Santa Ana, Panama City. Pray for the continued discipleship of these new believers so that they may become fruitful followers of Jesus Christ.

Mary and Frank Alexander coordinate Jacob's Well Ministry at the Sturgis, S.D., Motorcycle Rally and work as mission team recruiters for Black Hills Area Association. Pray for six new mission teams for summer 2004 and 30 volunteers for Jacob's Well Ministry.

For: (1) Women's Retreat (CWJC, BNF, Sisters Who Care, Language), Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 5 p.m. 19th - 3 p.m., 20th (WMU); (2) Pray that prayer walking teams will go to help break the chains that Satan has so cunningly wrought upon the Hausa people of Niger Republic.

For: (1) GA Mother/Daughter Overnight, Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 5 p.m. 26th - 2 p.m. 27th (WMU); (2) Young Ministers' Retreat, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko, 1:30 p.m. 26th - 1 p.m., 27th (P/LD); (3) Pray for missionaries involved in various areas of theological education and other church related ministries.

Ryan and Heather Thompson are church planters in Charleston, S.C. Their focus is on demonstrating and communicating Christ to young adults in the area. Pray for the development of mission leaders who will help others be influencers for Christ.

For: (1) Young Ringers Festival, Alta Woods BC, Jackson, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (CM); (2) Pray that God will send Indonesian Christians who will willingly become evangelists and church planters. They are needed to share the Bible and their faith in Jesus with Muslims.

2004 Preaching & Worship Conference

Featured Presenters:
Ken Hemphill & Blake Scafidel

Trinity Baptist Church
Southaven, Monday, April 26

First Baptist Church
Brookhaven, Tuesday, April 27

Preaching from the New Testament



Ken Hemphill

Ken Hemphill is National Strategist for Empowering Kingdom Growth of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is author of Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur, The Antioch Effect, The Bonsai Theory of Church Growth and numerous others. A frequent contributor to articles and chapters in collections of other religious resources, he is also a nationally known lecturer.



Blake Scafidel

Blake Scafidel has been in full-time music ministry for 15 years and is currently serving as the minister of music and youth at FBC, Bude. He and his wife Carrene have been married 14 years. They have three children, and one dog.

For more info, call
Pastoral/Leadership
Development
at 1-800-748-1651
or
1-601-292-3305

HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Flowood Church, Flowood, will present A.D. A Musical for Easter and Beyond April 3 and 4 at 6 p.m. For more information, contact (601) 992-6464 or www.flowoodbaptist.org.

The Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, youth (pictured) will host an area wide pizza blast March 24 at 6 p.m. This is youth night for Wheeler Grove's Revival, March 22-24, with Bob Pittman. There will be a record participation in Sunday School, Wednesday night Bible study, and Tuesday morning breakfast.

Calvary Church, Jackson, will present A Place of Honor to honor all past and present Central Mississippi Christian Women's Job Corps mentors and recognize women in min-

istry March 23 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, call (601) 331-7074.

J.B. Bettes and family, Tumbling Shoals, Ark., will conduct J.B. Bettes Day March 28 at **Bethel Church, Water Valley.** Worship is at 11 a.m. with dinner to follow. James Edwards is pastor.



Youth of Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth

HOMECOMINGS & REVIVALS

First, Brooklyn: Revival Mar. 28-31; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Buddy Keyes, First, Richton, evangelist; Don Morgan, First, Richton, music; James Taylor, pastor.

Furrs, Pontotoc: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jackie Gray, evangelist; Danny Magee, music; nursery provided; Joe Herndon, pastor.

Cairo, Ecu: Revival Mar. 21-25; 7 p.m. nightly; Scott Hudson, speaker; James Matthews, music; Bill Dowdy, pastor.

Wheeler Grove, Corinth: Revival Mar. 22-24; Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bob Pittman, Kirby Woods, Memphis, Tenn., preaching; nightly singing; nursery provided; Kara Blackard, pastor.

North Winona, Winona: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served Sunday-Wed.; Gene Henderson, evangelist; Price Harris, music.

First Myrick, Laurel: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday, 10:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mike Alexander, Waysborough, Ga., evangelist; Tim Nelson, worship; Jackie Spell, pastor.

Ebenezer, Liberty: Anniversary in May 2006; 200th anniversary; anyone associated with Ebenezer should send a picture to share in the memory book to Kitty Ivey, 2787 Lower Centreville Road, Liberty, MS 39645.

Wayside, Vicksburg: Revival Mar. 28-31; Sunday, 11 a.m. with dinner to follow; 7 p.m. nightly; Billy Joe Deere, speaker; Bill Clark, music; all are welcome; Darrell White, pastor; for more information, call (601) 636-3271.

Parkhill, Jackson: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bill Bozeman, evangelist; Joe Styron, music; for more information, call (601) 926-4618.

New Hope, Sumrall: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Dewey Smith, speaking; Bob Thames, musician; George Gerald Aultman, interim pastor; all are welcome.

Oak Grove, Smith: Revival Mar. 21-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Stan Buckley, First, Jackson, evangelist; Alex Craft, Clarke-Venable, Decatur, music; John Barnes, pastor.

Trinity, Pearl: Anniversary Mar. 28; worship, 11 a.m.; R.C. Rice, Star, speaking; John Wolbrecht, music; a covered dish meal will be served; Wolbrecht concert will follow; Kenny Goff, pastor.

College News

William Carey College will present pianist Ann Schein in concert April 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Smith Auditorium, Hattiesburg campus. Schein will also



Schein

conduct a public master class on April 2 at 9:30 a.m. in the Thomas Fine Arts Building. The master class will feature piano students from William Carey College, the University of Southern Mississippi, and Millsaps College. Tickets for the concert are \$10 general admission and \$5 for students. For more information, call (601) 318-6175.

The Mississippi College Naturals will perform their spring show, Naturally Spectacular, April 1-3 at 7:30 p.m. in Swor Auditorium, MC campus. This year's show, Small-Medium-Large, will include television theme songs and music from the movies and Broadway. Thursday is student night. Tickets may be ordered by calling (601) 925-3856. Tickets are also available from Naturals members and at the door.

"on earth as it is in HEAVEN...
behold the KINGDOM of GOD!"



Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Youth Ministry Lab
April 2-3, 2004

- Targeted training for experienced and rookie youth ministers, summer youth interns, volunteer youth leaders, and worship leaders.
- Three tracks for students 7th grade through college who want to be youth leaders, go deeper spiritually or pursue a calling to vocational ministry.
- Preparation for international mission trips, a weekend of cross-cultural training led by International Mission Board personnel.
- Guidance for parents of teens who want to become spiritual leaders for their own children.



Frederick D. Haynes III
Featured Speaker

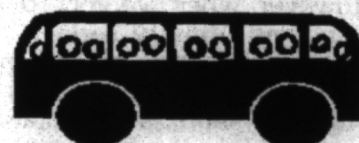


The Smith Band
Featured Worship Leaders

For more information: www.swbts.edu/youthlab
817-923-1921 ext. 6239 or youthlab@swbts.edu

For The "Right Deal" On A Church Bus

Call Bill Clark
601-992-4149
601-750-2364



RiteWay Bus Sales

Please join us for a
Community Wide Prayer Breakfast
Anderson Hall, B.C. Rogers Student Center,
Mississippi College

Good Friday, April 9, 2004
Serving begins at 7:00 a.m.
Program from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.



Mississippi College
5th Circuit United States Court of Appeals
Judge Charles W. Pickering, Sr.
Music will be directed by
Cory Taylor, Minister of Music at New Horizon Baptist Church

Breakfast Buffet \$10.00

Tickets can be purchased in the Christian Development Office,
Room 101 Nelson Hall, Mississippi College
& the Clinton Chamber of Commerce

For questions or more information, please call
(601) 925-3235 or E-mail mcole@mc.edu



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Refusing to Compromise

Daniel 3:1-2, 4-6, 13-18, 21, 24-25, 27b-28

By Patsy Foster

Soldiers who go into battle must face a sobering fact: they may be captured. Before they ever leave home soil, soldiers are trained to realize that in captivity their allegiance may be tested, that they must avoid compromise with the enemy and that they must trust their nation to stand behind them.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had no nation to stand behind them. Taken as captives from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar's forces, they were given new names and placed in positions of management in Babylon. Though they were in a pagan land far from home, they remained servants of the most high God and knew that he was with them. That assurance was severely tested when King

Nebuchadnezzar unveiled a large golden image and the herald proclaimed that all people, upon hearing the sound of music, were to fall down and worship it. Daniel 3: 8 says, "And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow. When the angry king learned of their disobedience, he asked them, "...and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (verse 15b). They responded in verses 17 and 18, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that



Foster

we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Their minds were set. They were ready to lose it all if necessary.

Furious, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.

He commanded that the army's mightiest men bind the three and cast them into the fire. Verse 22b says that "...the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego." Strange things began to happen in that furnace, just as they do when we're in the furnace of life and God intervenes in our behalf. The king saw four men in the furnace, not three, and they were unbound and walking in the midst of the fire, and were not hurt. "And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," the king said (verse 25).

Nebuchadnezzar beckoned

to them, "...Ye servants of the most high God, come forth..." (verse 26). A crowd of high ranking people gathered to see these men "...upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them" (verse 27). The king made a decree that no one could speak amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, because, "...there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (verse 29b). The three young men deliberately chose the path of most resistance, regardless of the cost, and in so doing, saw the glory of God in a way that few have. Even more than that, others also saw and acknowledged God.

Arthur J. Gossip said, "You will not stroll into Christlikeness with your hands in your pockets, shoving the door open with a careless shoulder. This is no hobby for one's leisure moments,

taken up at intervals when we have nothing much to do, and put down and forgotten when our life grows full and interesting... It takes all one's strength, and all one's heart, and all one's mind, and all one's soul, given freely and recklessly and without restraint."

Christians living in North Korea have learned this truth. To openly practice the Christian faith in that country can result in imprisonment and death. In recent years as North Korean refugees have fled the persecution, they have reported that the church of Jesus Christ has not only survived, it has grown! (<http://www.opendoor-susa.org/>)

In our land of peace, let us put on the whole armor of God and boldly face the testings of our faith. Let us refuse to bow to the darkness of this world, as we proclaim the glorious truth — God is with us!

Foster is a member of Murphy Creek Church, Louisville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Godliness

I Timothy 4

By Bobby McKay

I don't know of a Mississippi Baptist alive that doesn't love a good buffet. It makes no difference if you are talking about Mexican or Chinese food, salad bar or an all you can eat seafood extravaganza, we are a group of individuals that love to eat! Why do we love the feed trough method of dining so much in our culture? One word: convenience. Not long after I moved to Waterford a couple took my wife and me to dine at an all you can eat type restaurant. Now up until that night I had never eaten a raw oyster. My friend let me tell you, don't say "Yuck" until you have tried one. It would have never entered my mind to order a whole plate worth of raw oysters, but hey, they were included with the price of all the other items on the buffet.

We as Christian men and women have resorted to buffet Christianity or convenient Christianity. When it comes to God's forgiveness, love, or mercy we want to pile our plate high and get full on the wonderful attributes of the Father. However, when we get to things such as humility, service, and godliness, we pass them over for more appealing morsels of who God is and what He requires. In the heart of chapter four Paul tells us that if we miss out on godliness and discipline we are missing out on the joy and satisfaction of a complete experience with the Lord. So grab a plate and don't say, "Yuck."

I. REJECT FALSE TEACHINGS (4:1-5)

In the first few verses of I



McKay

Timothy chapter one we remember that Paul was warning Timothy to be mindful and cautious of those that were teaching strange and heretical doctrines. He revisits this thought in these five verses. It appears that Paul is referring to things in the future. In verse one of the HCSB it says "latter times." While I am by no stretch of the imagination an authority in eschatology, it does seem terribly clear that we are in the times that deeply burdened the Apostle Paul.

Paul shares with us in verse five that while it is important for us to reject ungodly beliefs, it is also necessary that we know the value of God's Word and practice the humbling and worshipful form of communication with God known as prayer.

II. REACH FOR GODLINESS (4:6-10)

It is truly a shame that in our vocabulary as Christians the word godliness is misunderstood. We either think that the idea of godliness carries with it

the implication that we must be perfect every second of every day to obtain the title of godly. On the other hand, many people feel that godliness is only for a select number of Super-Christians. Both definitions are mistaken.

Verse seven tells us that to produce authentic godliness we must be willing to discipline ourselves. You must realize (and probably already know) that this is no small task. It is a daily process. No one has lost weight or got in shape after only a couple of hours of working out. Please don't assume you will automatically be godly after one prayer or one Bible study.

While in Savannah, Tennessee last month, I happened to notice the First Baptist Church sign. It read, "The mark of a Christian should be a warm heart rather than a hot head." Whoever thought of that statement most likely understands that godliness is a life-long quest, not an overnight success. I urge you, my friends, continue in the disciplines that will produce god-

liness. You have nothing to lose from increased prayer and personal Bible study.

III. RELISH YOUR AGE (4:11-16)

As a 26 year old pastor, this passage is of great encouragement to me. Paul knew that because of Timothy's age some would not take him seriously or attempt to disqualify the message he would share. Paul shares with Timothy in verse 12 the formula for an effective ministry whether you are 26 or 126 years old. He tells Timothy to conduct himself in a way that no one can look at him as just a kid.

There is no doubt that Timothy was called by God. Paul knew this and wanted to drive home the point that he must always preach the word, and use the spiritual gifts that God had given him. It is powerful for us to see in these verses Paul sounding like a father concerned that his son in the ministry Timothy stay focused on the things that would matter most as a minister of the Gospel.

McKay is pastor of Spring Hill Church, Waterford.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items are submitted for publication in the Baptist Record must be either (a) approved by the editor or (b) printed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper and submitted on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail; (b) three-and-a-half-inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscapes, buildings, or objects only. Photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Bill Causey, Interm Executive Director

P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242

e-mail: bcv1@misnet.com

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JANUARY 1 - 31, 2004 MEMORIALS

Murdes Brown
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Ruth & Charles Brandon

Randy Burnham
Beverly Culberson

Thelma Smith Bush
Mr. & Mrs. Lamar Arthur
Dorcie Brister, Dawn & Donna & Families

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Leonard Chamberlin, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T. Kendrick

Charles Champion
Mr. & Mrs. Neil E. Wrenn

Melburn Chandler
Remus Baptist Church

J. W. Christian
Mrs. Juanita Bulimore

Edward Clement
Jerry & Marilyn McAnally

Mrs. Gladys M. Cobb
Mrs. Dorothy W. Shaw & Family

Mrs. Lucille Coggin
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew J. Churchwell

Clima Glenn Cole
Mr. Roger Easterling

Col. Brady Cole
Mr. & Mrs. Morris G. Blocker

Henry Cooper
Mr. Edward H. Odom

Bobbie Coor
Mr. & Mrs. Phillip R. Hilton

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Meridian Board of Realtors, Inc.
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Topisaw Baptist Church

Butch Crawford
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Mr. Edgar F. Cresswell
Mr. & Mrs. Billie J. Bonner

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First Baptist Church

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Mr. & Mrs. Jack Darden
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David, Dorothea & Mark

Hoffman

Marion Dawson
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Mrs. Annie Louise Eakin
Mr. Norman Weathersby Jr.

Burkett Eaton
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Hill

Augustus Temple "Gus" Evans
Mr. & Mrs. R. E. Turman
Shuqualak Baptist Church

Mr. Billy W. Whitfield

Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm M.

Norwood Sr
Adult Mens Bible Class,
Shuqualak

Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Young Jr.

Mr. J. V. Park Jr.

Ms. Carol Jo Hagerman

Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Thomas

Mr. & Mrs. Ted Skipper

Mr. Gus Evans
Adult Ladies SSC, Shuqualak BC

Elizabeth Evans
Ms. Barbara C. Carroll

Mimi Evans
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas M. Bryson

Mr. W. C. Evans
Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Tillson

Mr. William M. Ewell, Sr.
Pat & Huntington Odom

Mrs. Katherine A. Day
Ms. Katherine S. Spahr
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Mrs. Marilyn Ezelle

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Irma Felts
Dr. & Mrs. Gene Warren

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First-ever Baptist church takes root in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (BP) — Nearly a year after U.S. troops began liberating Iraq, native evangelicals in the fragile country are emerging with boldness to take advantage of the newly granted religious freedom without which they lived so long.

sons, figuring that this would show our Lord that we were serious about being a bold witness for Christ though we really didn't expect that many people to attend," Yacoub said. "About 15 minutes before the service started, all the chairs under the

Amman and special adviser to the Baptist Union of Iraq, who read letters of greetings from Baptists around the world. Representatives from the International Mission Board, the Brazilian Baptist Convention, the Jordan Baptist Convention and Campus Crusade for Christ were among those who attended.

More than 20 ordained pastors and deacons from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and the United States prayed over Nabil Sara, pastor of the new church. They asked God to grant him wisdom and courage as he leads the church through a crucial period of Iraqi history. While preaching from 2 Chronicles 7:1-11 on Solomon's dedication of the temple, Iraq-Jordan Task Force chairman Nabeeh Abbassi noted how God worked patiently through a war in Iraq to bring about the progress they celebrated that day.

A group of 10 Southern Baptists from Kentucky was among the volunteer teams traveling to Iraq to initiate interest in the Gospel. Eight people from Porter Memorial Church in Lexington and two from the Greenup Baptist Association in eastern Kentucky spent two weeks in December passing out 200 Arabic New Testaments and 650 bags of food in northern Iraq.

The Kentucky team entered a region of the country where other Baptist volunteers had not been.

"[We wondered] when we were giving out stuff, 'Would we be attacked?'" said Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial. "But in all four groups, there wasn't a single problem. The people were well-behaved, appreciative and helped unload the truck."

Mike Moynihan, a member of Porter Memorial, reiterated Henard's observation that the Iraqi people were cooperative.

"We proved to ourselves that the Iraqi nation is a people who want to be free spiritually," Moynihan said. "There is a terrorist element there, but the nation does not hate us."

As the team passed out some of the 2.4 million pounds of food donated by Southern Baptists across America last summer, they told people the food was a gift from the American people to help them in their struggle for freedom.

A tribal leader who met with the Kentucky team replied, "We are not friends, we are brothers," before embracing Henard and kissing his cheek.

When Henard then gave the man a copy of the New Testament, the man put the book on top of his head and said, "If this is a gift from you, I must receive it and I must read it."

The team later heard a report that the man had read the New Testament and wants to talk to Henard about it.

Asa Greear, director of missions for the Greenup association, said he was impressed by the warmth of the people and their eagerness to have Americans share in their culture in such ways as purchasing clothing made by the local people.

"There's an openness," Greear said. "If I could speak Arabic or Kurdish, I could have had several opportunities to share my faith."

The group concluded the people are hungry for a Word from God, and those who have gone to Iraq as volunteers must encourage others to take advantage of any opportunity to go and share.

"We need to go back," Moynihan said. "I'd go back tomorrow."

In other Iraq news, John Hull, president of EQUIP, an Atlanta-based organization founded by John Maxwell to provide leadership development for Christians worldwide, said the greatest need of the church in Iraq is for biblical leadership training and resources.

EQUIP reported that in Baghdad there are only 12 pastors for the five million residents, and in Basra, a city of 2.5 million, there is only one evangelical congregation.



GIFT OF HOPE — Bill Henard (right), pastor of Porter Memorial Church in Lexington, Ky., delivered Arabic New Testaments to Kurdish tribesmen in northern Iraq. The tribe leader responded with thanks for the gifts. (BP photo by Josh Booth)

The first Baptist church ever established in Iraq was dedicated with more than 700 people in attendance. Leaders say the church, called the National Evangelical Baptist Church in Baghdad, is the cornerstone upon which future Baptist work in Iraq will be built.

In addition, teams of Baptist volunteers have worked in various regions of Iraq, distributing food and Bibles and sowing seeds of interest in what God wants to do in the nation.

Muthafar Yacoub, moderator of the Baptist Union of Iraq, said the response at the Jan. 16 dedication ceremony of the Baptist church exceeded expectations and was the first time in decades that Christians from a broad scope of evangelical backgrounds gathered openly in Iraq for a church service.

"We anticipated and originally planned for around 550 per-

tent were taken, so we went next door to the headquarters of a local political party and asked to borrow more chairs.

"We took all 100 chairs they had and placed them in the back of the tent and around the sides," Yacoub said. "[When the service started] these chairs were also full. We counted more than 50 adults standing in the back of the tent during the service, not including any of the children."

Baptist leaders from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon spoke during the dedication service, including Brian Barlow, general director of the Baptist School of

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